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AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGES IN IOWA: SECOND QUARTER 2006

The average weekly wage in Polk County increased 5.8 percent from the second quarter of 2005 to the second quarter of 2006, the largest advance among Iowa's three counties with 75,000 or more jobs as measured by 2005 annual average employment. Polk County, the State's largest county based on employment, also had the highest average weekly wage, \$780. (See table 1.) Regional Commissioner Jay A. Mousa noted that among Iowa's three largest counties, Polk was the only one to report wage growth above the national increase of 4.4 percent, bringing its wage level close to the national average of \$784.

Wage levels

With an average weekly wage of \$780, Polk County ranked 114th highest among the nation's 325 large counties. Linn County's average weekly wage of \$736 ranked 155th and Scott County's wage of \$630 ranked 289th. Though Iowa's three large counties were among 214 nationwide that had average weekly wages below the national average, only Scott County ranked in the bottom quartile.

Across the country, average weekly wages were higher than the national average in 110 of the largest 325 U.S. counties. New York County, N.Y., held the top position among the large counties with an average weekly wage of \$1,453. Santa Clara, Calif., was second with an average wage of \$1,386, followed by Arlington, Va. (\$1,335), Washington, D.C. (\$1,300), and Somerset, N.J. (\$1,242).

At the other end of the spectrum, the lowest average weekly wage was reported in Cameron County, Texas (\$484), followed by the counties of Hidalgo, Texas (\$494), Horry, S.C. (\$527), and Webb, Texas, and Yakima, Wash. (\$530 each).

At the state level, the average weekly wage in Iowa was \$639, \$145 below the nationwide figure, ranking it 41st among the 50 states and the District of Columbia. (See table 2.) Over the year, average weekly wages in Iowa rose 4.1 percent. The five highest wage levels in the nation were in the District of Columbia (\$1,300), Connecticut (\$971), Massachusetts (\$963), New York (\$962), and New Jersey (\$948). Average weekly wages in this group were more than 20 percent above that for the nation. At the other end of the scale, three states had wage levels averaging less than 75 percent of national earnings: South Dakota (\$563), Montana (\$575), and Mississippi (\$587).

Over-the-year changes

Of Iowa's three large counties, only Polk recorded wage growth above the national increase of 4.4 percent in the second quarter of 2006. (See table 1.) With a wage gain of 5.8 percent, Polk County ranked 56th highest among the nation's 325 largest counties. Linn County (3.1 percent) and Scott County (0.6 percent) placed 231st and 303rd, respectively, in wage growth, both in the bottom third of the rankings.

Nationally, the average weekly wage rose by 4.4 percent over the year. Among the largest counties, Orleans, La., led the nation in growth in average weekly wages with an increase of 28.0 percent from the second quarter of 2005. Jefferson, La., was second with wage growth of 16.3 percent, followed by the counties of Harrison, Miss. (15.2 percent), Rock Island, Ill. (10.5 percent), and Somerset, N.J. (10.0 percent). The high average weekly wage growth rates for Orleans, Jefferson, and Harrison Counties were related to the disproportionate job losses in lower-paid industries due to the impact of Hurricane Katrina. That is, the reduction in the number of low paid jobs over the year due to the storm boosted average wages in those areas.

Ten counties experienced over-the-year declines in average weekly wages. San Mateo, Calif., and McLean, Ill., had the largest declines, -5.0 percent each, followed by the counties of Clayton, Ga. (-3.8 percent), Webb, Texas (-2.0 percent), and Rockingham, N.H. (-1.2 percent).

At the state level, the average weekly wage in Iowa increased 4.1 percent, ranking it 28th in growth among the 50 states and District of Columbia. The neighboring states of Minnesota and Missouri had wage gains averaging 4.0 and 3.7 percent, respectively. (See table 2.) The highest over-the-year wage growth in the second quarter of 2006 was recorded by Wyoming (10.3 percent), then Louisiana (10.2 percent), and Idaho and Oklahoma (7.4 percent each). The lowest wages increases were recorded in Nevada (1.4 percent) and Michigan (1.8 percent).

Average weekly wage data by county are compiled under the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program, also known as the ES-202 program. The data are derived from reports submitted by employers subject to state and federal unemployment insurance (UI) laws. The 8.8 million employer reports cover 135.5 million full- and part-time workers. The average weekly values are calculated by dividing quarterly total wages by the average of the three monthly employment levels of those covered by UI programs. The result is then divided by 13, the number of weeks in a quarter. It is to be noted, therefore, that over-the-year wage changes for geographic areas may reflect shifts in the composition of employment by industry, occupation, and such other factors as hours of work. Thus, wages may vary among counties, metropolitan areas, or states for reasons other than changes in the average wage level. Data for all states, Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs), counties, and the nation are available on the BLS Web site at <http://www.bls.gov/cew/>; however, data in QCEW press releases have been revised (see Technical Note below) and may not match the data contained on the Bureau's Web site.

Additional statistics and other information

An annual bulletin, *Employment and Wages*, features comprehensive information by detailed industry on establishments, employment, and wages for the nation and all states. The 2005 edition of this bulletin contains selected data produced by Business

Employment Dynamics (BED) on job gains and losses, as well as selected data from the fourth quarter 2005 version of this news release. This edition will also be the first to include the data on a CD for enhanced access and usability. As a result of this change, the printed booklet will contain only selected graphic representation of QCEW data; the data tables themselves will be published exclusively in electronic formats as PDF and fixed-width text files. *Employment and Wages Annual Averages, 2005* will be available for sale in early 2007 from the United States Government Printing Office, Superintendent of Documents, P.O. Box 371954, Pittsburgh, PA 15250, telephone 866-512-1800, outside Washington, D.C. Within Washington, D.C., the telephone number is 202-512-1800. The fax number is 202-512-2104. Also, the 2005 bulletin will be available in a portable document format (PDF) on the BLS Web site at <http://www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn05.htm>.

QCEW-based news releases issued by other regional offices have been placed at one convenient Web site location, <http://www.bls.gov/cew/cewregional.htm>.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: 202-691-5200; TDD message referral phone number: 1-800-877-8339.

For personal assistance or further information on the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages Program, as well as other Bureau programs, contact the Midwest Information Office in Chicago at (312) 353-1880 from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. CT.

Hurricane Katrina

The measures of employment and wages reported in this news release reflect the impact of Hurricane Katrina and ongoing labor market trends. The effects of Hurricane Katrina, which hit the Gulf Coast on August 29, 2005, were first reflected in the September QCEW employment counts and the wage totals for the third quarter of 2005. The impact of this catastrophic storm in parts of Louisiana and Mississippi continue to be reflected in monthly employment and quarterly wage totals in the second quarter of 2006. For more information, see the QCEW section of the Katrina coverage on the BLS Web site (<http://www.bls.gov/katrina/qcewquestions.htm>).

TECHNICAL NOTE

QCEW data are the sums of individual establishment records reflecting the number of establishments that exist in a county or industry at a point in time. For this reason, county and industry data are not designed to be used as a time series.

The preliminary QCEW data presented in this release may differ from data released by the individual states as well as from the data presented on the BLS Web site. The potential differences result from several causes. Differences between BLS and State published data may be due to the continuing receipt, review and editing of UI data over time. On the other hand, differences between data in this release and the data found on the BLS Web site are the result of adjustments made to improve over-the-year comparisons. Specifically, these adjustments account for administrative (noneconomic) changes such as a correction to a previously reported location or industry classification. Adjusting for these administrative changes allows users to more accurately assess changes of an economic nature (such as a firm moving from one county to another or changing its primary economic activity) over a 12-month period. Currently, adjusted data are available only from BLS press releases.

Table 1. Covered (1) employment and wages in the United States and the 3 largest counties in Iowa, second quarter 2006 (2)

Area	Employment	Average Weekly Wage (3)			
	June 2006 (thousands)	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level (4)	Percent change, second quarter 2005-06 (5)	National ranking by percent change (4)
United States (6)	135,481.1	\$784	--	4.4	--
Iowa	1,502.9	639	41	4.1	28
Linn, Iowa	122.4	736	155	3.1	231
Polk, Iowa	274.0	780	114	5.8	56
Scott, Iowa	91.0	630	289	0.6	303

(1) Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

(2) Data are preliminary.

(3) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(4) Ranking does not include the county of San Juan, Puerto Rico.

(5) Percent changes were computed from quarterly employment and pay data adjusted for noneconomic county reclassifications.

(6) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

Table 2. Covered (1) employment and wages by state, second quarter 2006 (2)

State	Employment	Average weekly wage (3)			
	June 2006 (thousands)	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, second quarter 2005-06	National ranking by percent change
United States (4)	135,481.1	\$784	-	4.4	-
Alabama	1,944.8	672	34	4.3	24
Alaska	327.2	788	14	4.2	26
Arizona	2,581.3	753	20	4.1	28
Arkansas	1,185.3	612	46	3.2	44
California	15,733.0	888	6	4.5	22
Colorado	2,277.7	794	12	3.3	40
Connecticut	1,700.6	971	2	2.8	48
Delaware	430.4	851	8	6.8	5
District of Columbia	677.9	1,300	1	5.3	10
Florida	7,889.6	722	23	4.8	18
Georgia	4,054.1	743	22	3.1	45
Hawaii	621.8	704	26	4.0	31
Idaho	660.0	612	46	7.4	3
Illinois	5,912.4	837	9	4.1	28
Indiana	2,917.5	684	32	3.0	47
Iowa	1,502.9	639	41	4.1	28
Kansas	1,339.5	667	36	5.0	16
Kentucky	1,797.2	672	34	3.4	39
Louisiana	1,831.7	680	33	10.2	2
Maine	616.0	632	44	3.8	36
Maryland	2,567.8	855	7	4.7	19
Massachusetts	3,256.7	963	3	5.1	13
Michigan	4,320.8	783	15	1.8	50
Minnesota	2,731.9	789	13	4.0	31
Mississippi	1,127.4	587	49	5.6	8
Missouri	2,743.6	703	27	3.7	38
Montana	442.8	575	50	4.0	31
Nebraska	915.6	632	44	5.7	7
Nevada	1,284.6	748	21	1.4	51
New Hampshire	639.1	774	17	2.5	49
New Jersey	4,053.9	948	5	5.1	13
New Mexico	824.4	653	39	4.6	21
New York	8,566.2	962	4	5.4	9
North Carolina	3,965.0	690	29	3.8	36
North Dakota	342.4	591	48	5.3	10
Ohio	5,396.5	716	24	3.3	40
Oklahoma	1,512.5	639	41	7.4	3
Oregon	1,732.5	710	25	3.3	40
Pennsylvania	5,675.5	766	18	3.9	34
Rhode Island	490.7	755	19	4.7	19
South Carolina	1,858.5	646	40	4.2	26
South Dakota	396.1	563	51	4.3	24
Tennessee	2,749.2	703	27	4.9	17
Texas	9,965.6	781	16	5.8	6
Utah	1,182.9	655	38	5.3	10
Vermont	307.7	665	37	3.1	45
Virginia	3,697.5	822	10	4.4	23
Washington	2,911.9	799	11	5.1	13
West Virginia	714.3	636	43	3.9	34
Wisconsin	2,828.3	685	30	3.3	40
Wyoming	278.6	685	30	10.3	1
Puerto Rico	1,039.6	435	(5)	4.1	(5)
Virgin Islands	45.3	679	(5)	5.6	(5)

(1) Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

(2) Data are preliminary.

(3) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(4) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

(5) Data not included in the national ranking.